

## Message Text

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ACTION COME-00

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 ISO-00 OES-07 SS-15 EPA-01  
CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 L-03 INT-05 DLOS-09 /073 W  
-----080885 220849Z /11  
P 220803Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY TOKYO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 6341  
INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
CINCPAC HONOLULU HI

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 TOKYO 04559

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1  
TAGS: JA US UR PBOR SENV  
SUBJECT: GOJ OBJECTIONS TO PROPOSED US-USSR TSUNAMI  
PROJECT IN VICINITY OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES

REF: STATE 061273 (NOTAL); STATE 43981 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: GOJ HAS REQUESTED THAT USG EITHER SEEK TO MOVE  
ENTIRE US-USSR PROPOSED TSUNAMI PROJECT INTO AREA WELL  
REMOVED FROM NORTHERN TERRITORIES OR TO RESTRICT SHARPLY  
PARTICIPATION OF INVOLVED AMERICAN SCIENTISTS IN ANY  
ACTIVITIES WITHIN 12 MILES OF DISPUTED ISLANDS (WHICH  
JAPANESE CONSIDER THEIR TERRITORIAL WATERS). FONOFF HAS  
POINTED OUT THAT SHOULD JOINT PROJECT GO AHEAD, THERE IS  
POTENTIAL FOR STRONGLY NEGATIVE PUBLIC REACTION WITHIN  
JAPAN. APART FROM JAPANESE OFFICIAL DEMARCHE, EMBASSY  
AGREES THERE IS POTENTIAL FOR POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR  
USG AND URGES PROJECT BE RESTRUCTURED, AT LEAST IN REGARD  
TO US PARTICIPATION. END SUMMARY

1. IN RESPONSE TO EARLIER EMBASSY BRIEFING OF FONOFF ON  
PROPOSED US-USSR TSUNAMI PROJECT BASED ON INFORMATION  
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PROVIDED BY NOAA PROJECT LEADER BERTRAND THOMPSON, FONOFF  
1ST EAST EUROPEAN DIVDIR TOGO CALLED IN EMBOFF MARCH 20  
TO PRESENT GOJ'S FORMAL VIEWS ON SUBJECT.

2. TOGO EXPRESSED GRATITUDE FOR USG'S ADVANCE NOTIFICATION  
OF GOJ ON PROPOSED PROJECT. WHILE EMPHASIZING JAPANESE  
DESIRE NOT TO INTERFERE IN SOVIET-AMERICAN BILATERAL

RELATIONS, TOGO STATED THAT GOJ NEVERTHELESS CONSIDERED IMPLEMENTATION OF JOINT PROJECT IN AREA OF DISPUTED NORTHERN TERRITORIES, AT ONE POINT WITHIN 3-5 KILOMETERS OF SHIKOTAN ISLAND, AS "SINGULARLY INAPPROPRIATE," PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF PAST USG EXPRESSIONS OF SUPPORT FOR JAPAN'S LONGSTANDING CLAIM TO THESE ISLANDS. TOGO NOTED THAT NORTHERN TERRITORIES WAS UNUSUALLY SENSITIVE ISSUE FOR GOJ, GIVEN NOT ONLY STRENGTH OF POPULAR SENTIMENT FOR THEIR RETURN BUT ALSO PRESENT PERIOD OF STRAIN IN JAPAN-SOVIET RELATIONS.

3. TOGO SAID THAT IN CONTRAST WITH SITUATION IN 1975, WHEN LAST JOINT US-USSR PROJECT TOOK PLACE, GOJ HAD SINCE DECLARED 12-MILE TERRITORIAL LIMIT, WHICH, UNDER JAPANESE INTERPRETATION, INCLUDED DISPUTED ISLANDS. CONSEQUENTLY, EVEN IF JOINT PROJECT DID NOT INCLUDE ACTUAL LANDING ON SHIKOTAN OR OTHER THREE DISPUTED ISLANDS, CERTAIN OFF-SHORE EXPERIMENTS WOULD IN FACT BE TAKING PLACE IN WHAT GOJ CONSIDERED ITS TERRITORIAL WATERS. GOJ WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO PROTEST SUCH ACTION FORMALLY. (DURING PRESENTATION, TOGO ALSO TOOK NOTE THAT, BASED ON INFORMATION PROVIDED BY NOAA, OTHER EXPERIMENTS MIGHT BE CONDUCTED WITHIN 12 MILES OF SECTIONS OF HOKKAIDO COAST OUTSIDE OF DISPUTED AREA. GOJ, HE STATED, WOULD HAVE TO RESERVE ITS POSITION FOR PRESENT ON ACCEPTABILITY OF THESE EXPERIMENTS.)

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4. TOGO THEN PRESENTED FORMAL REQUEST THAT USG SEEK TO MOVE JOINT PROJECT INTO AREA WELL REMOVED FROM NORTHERN TERRITORIES. IF SUCH CHANGE OF VENUE WERE NOT POSSIBLE FOR SCIENTIFIC REASONS, GOJ REQUESTED THAT AMERICAN SCIENTISTS INVOLVED IN PROJECT NOT PARTICIPATE IN ANY ACTIVITIES WITHIN 12 MILES OF SHIKOTAN AND OTHER DISPUTED ISLANDS. EMBOFF SAID THAT FROM LIMITED INFORMATION AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY, IT WAS NOT READILY APPARENT WHETHER SUCH RIGID DIVISION OF PARTICIPATION AND NON-PARTICIPATION DURING PROJECT WOULD BE FEASIBLE.

5. TOGO SAID THAT WHILE GOJ HAD NO OBJECTION AT THIS TIME TO NORMAL TRANSIT OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS OR EQUIPMENT THROUGH JAPAN TO NAKHODKA, SOVIET RESEARCH VESSEL "VALERIAN URYVAEV" WOULD NOT BE PERMITTED TO CALL AT ANY JAPANESE PORT BECAUSE OF ITS PAST ACTIONS IN JAPANESE WATERS. TOGO DECLINED TO ELABORATE ON THIS LATTER POINT.

6. TOGO SAID THAT GOJ OPPOSITION TO PROPOSED JOINT PROJECT WAS NOT MERELY PRO-FORMA ATTEMPT TO MAINTAIN LEGAL VALIDITY OF ITS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS. FONOFF, WHICH WAS TREATING QUESTION OF TSUNAMI PROJECT ON CONFIDENTIAL

BASIS, SERIOUSLY FEARED THAT AMERICAN PARTICIPATION WITH SOVIETS IN OFFICIALLY-SPONSORED PROJECT IN NORTHERN TERRITORIES, WHICH WOULD INEVITABLY BE PUBLICIZED, WOULD PROVOKE STRONG NEGATIVE REACTION FROM JAPANESE PRESS AND PUBLIC. HE OBSERVED THAT IT WOULD BE DOUBLY EMBARRASSING IF, UNDER PRESSURE FROM DIET, FONOFF WOULD HAVE TO ADMIT THAT USG WENT AHEAD WITH PROJECT OVER OFFICIAL JAPANESE OBJECTIONS.

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 TOKYO 04559

7. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH LOW-KEY IN MANNER, TOGO MADE NO SECRET OF SERIOUSNESS WITH WHICH FONOFF VIEWS THIS QUESTION. WHILE EMBASSY IS UNABLE TO JUDGE WHETHER GOJ REQUEST EITHER TO MOVE ENTIRE VENUE OF PROJECT TO ANOTHER AREA OR TO RESTRICT SHARPLY PARTICIPATION OF AMERICAN SCIENTISTS IS INDEED FEASIBLE, WE CAN CONFIRM TOGO'S ASSESSMENT OF PROJECT'S POTENTIAL FOR CONSIDERABLE POLITICAL EMBARRASSMENT FOR USG WITHIN JAPAN. OPPOSITION TO SOVIET RETENTION OF NORTHERN TERRITORIES IS SINGLE POST-WAR FOREIGN POLICY ISSUE ON WHICH ALL OF JAPANESE PUBLIC, PRESS AND POLITICAL PARTIES FROM COMMUNISTS TO FAR RIGHT ARE UNITED. JAPANESE SENSITIVITY TO THIS TERRITORIAL DISPUTE HAS BEEN HEIGHTENED BY LAST YEAR'S UNUSUALLY ACRIMONIOUS FISHERIES DISPUTE WITH SOVIETS AND IN RECENT WEEKS BY MOSCOW'S EXPRESSIONS OF DISPLEASURE WITH POSSIBILITY OF SINO-JAPANESE PEACE AND FRIENDSHIP TREATY. IN THIS CONTEXT, JAPANESE WOULD VIEW USG DECISION TO PARTICIPATE IN JOINT PROJECT WITH SOVIETS IN THIS AREA AS RECOGNITION OF SOVIET OCCUPATION RIGHTS AND AN INEXPLICABLE AFFRONT TO JAPAN. ON GOVERNMENTAL LEVEL, ESTABLISHMENT OF JAPANESE 12-MILE LIMIT, WHICH DID NOT

EXIST AT TIME OF PREVIOUS PROJECT, MAKES IT POLITICALLY  
IMPOSSIBLE FOR GOJ TO IGNORE OFF-SHORE EXPERIMENTS.

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8. IN LIGHT OF THIS POTENTIAL FOR DAMAGE TO U.S. INTERESTS  
IN JAPAN, EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT TSUNAMI PROJECT  
BE RESTRUCTURED, AT LEAST IN REGARD TO US PARTICIPATION,  
TO MEET GOJ'S CONCERNS AND OBJECTIONS. MANSFIELD

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